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## CLAIMS

1. A splice chamber for accommodating and protecting a splice and excess optical cable between a launch platform and an underwater vehicle, the chamber comprising:-
  - 5 two half portions joined longitudinally to define a storage chamber;  
means for attaching the chamber to the launch platform;  
means for attaching the chamber to the underwater vehicle; and  
means for separating the two half portions of the chamber.
2. A chamber according to claim 1, wherein the storage chamber is shaped  
10 to control the bend radius of optical cable stored therein.
3. A chamber according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the storage chamber also provides protection for the splice and optical cable both during storage and during the launch phase.
4. A chamber according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the storage  
15 chamber is shaped to accommodate twists induced into the optical cable during launch of the underwater vehicle from the launch platform.
5. A chamber according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the means for separating the two half portions of the chamber comprises an active release device.
- 20 6. A chamber according to claim 5, wherein the active release device comprises a spring-loaded device.
7. A chamber according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the means for attaching the chamber to the launch platform comprises a hosepipe, the hosepipe being connected to the chamber by a swivel joint.
- 25 8. A chamber according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the means for attaching the chamber to the underwater vehicle includes a weak link.

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9. A chamber according to claim 8, wherein the weak link comprises a load-sensitive device.

10. A chamber according to claim 9, wherein the load-sensitive device comprises a shear pin located in a retaining collar.

5 11. A chamber according to claim 10, wherein the shear pin ruptures to release the retaining collar and hence the two half portions of the chamber at an appropriate time.

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